

# Western Europe

## Advocacy and Outreach

by the Western Europe Task Force

*Market Access and Compliance*



The United States and Europe enjoy a dynamic and prosperous trading relationship. The United States has a number of current trade agreements with the countries of Western Europe, including bilateral agreements with individual countries, agreements with the European Union, and multilateral agreements under the WTO. The number and scope of these commitments warranted the creation of a task force or team of trade specialists to monitor them. The team currently covers Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and the 15 EU countries. As the European Union admits additional members, overseeing these agreements will be even more vital. The team is composed of international trade specialists, located in Washington, D.C., and abroad, who work aggressively to identify and solve a wide variety of trade problems. Team members work closely with U.S. companies, embassies, and other government agencies to tackle common barriers, such as standards issues, intellectual property rights, and government procurement disputes, among others. The primary purpose of the team is to ensure that the U.S. business community receives the full benefit of applicable trade agreements.

### INFORMATION AND DISCOVERY

The U.S. exporting community must be made aware of the benefits of these trade agreements and how to notify the Commerce Department if adherence to them is inconsistent. A list of existing trade agreements between the United States and its trading partners is available on the Trade Compliance

Center Web site: [www.export.gov/tcc](http://www.export.gov/tcc). Companies can search by country or view the entire list alphabetically. The Web site also allows firms to report a trade barrier through an on-line form.

To ensure that companies are aware of the benefits of existing trade agreements, the team visits venues around the country. Target cities are chosen by examining which have the highest percentages of exports to Western Europe, as well as the highest concentrations of small and medium-sized companies.

In 2002, the task force traveled to 23 cities in 11 states, reaching more than 500 companies, 16 congressional and state trade offices, and over 40 trade associations and education centers. The states selected account for more than half of U.S. exports to Western Europe. Team members tapped into the expertise of international trade associations, congressional offices, industry sector associations, state economic development organizations, local government offices, universities and other trade education centers, and the nationwide U.S. Export Assistance Center network.

In a typical outreach session, task force members present an overview of common trade barriers that companies face and, using case studies, explain how the Commerce Department's Market Access and Compliance unit provides assistance to resolve exporters' problems quickly. They also offer targeted assistance to individual companies during one-on-one consultation.

### HELP IS IN YOUR REACH

The compliance team helps U.S. companies, regardless of size, overcome

trade barriers that adversely affect their overseas operations. However, before the team can help, specific problems must be clarified. As a result of aggressive domestic outreach and networking efforts, the task force uncovered 37 new incidences of U.S. firms experiencing trade barriers. These cases were global in scope, and to resolve them, task force members worked closely with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Department of State, and various domestic and foreign offices of the International Trade Administration. The team discovered 16 cases and resolved 14 cases. Of the new cases, task force members swiftly settled each issue in approximately eight weeks from the time a complaint was received to the time it was resolved.

The success of the team is based largely on its ability to quickly gather relevant data, determine the viability of complaints and, develop resolution strategies. The team relies on high-level Commerce Department assistance and the support of U.S. ambassadors posted in the countries where trade barriers exist. Issues that do not fall under the authority of the compliance team are forwarded to the appropriate offices for action, and members ensure appropriate follow-up.

The task force continues its aggressive campaign to acquaint the exporting community with Market Access and Compliance services. If your firm is experiencing difficulty trading with Western Europe or would like to resolve trade barriers in Western Europe, contact the task force leader, David De Falco, at (202) 482-2178, or visit the Trade Compliance Center Web site at [www.export.gov/tcc](http://www.export.gov/tcc).